

Remarks:

This amendment is submitted in an earnest effort to advance this case to issue without delay.

Claim 18 has been amended to include the features described on the paragraphs bridging pages 4 and 5 of the Specification. These amendments overcome the §112 rejection of paragraph 3 of the office action. Claim 18 relates to the test procedure for determining a fabric's tensile strength according to DIN 53815, which is principally determined by the number of bonded crossing points in the fabric, which in turn are a function of the composition of the fabric, the pressure with which it is prebonded, and the heat applied during prebonding. Typically this is determined by applying tension to the fabric after the prebonding. The longitudinal stretch is compared with the tension applied during the test and in fact graphed to determine the maximum tensile strength. Deriving the integral from this graph or curve relative to the overall maximum the maximum tension work is determined. This integral is the maximum or 100% tensile strength/work.

According to the invention the calender-roll pressure and/or temperature is set so that the spunbond has a strength equal to at least 50% of this maximum level. This is now clearly laid out in amended claim 18.

The fiber laminate according to the invention has exceptional durability and can even be used on rough surfaces without significant wear. At the same time, it is quite flexible and has considerable absorbent capacity. These properties are the result of the defined prebonding process. The steps of the instant invention allow various fibers to be combined to produce this superior product.

With respect to the art:

US 7,022,201 of Anderson (and 3,485,706 of Evans referenced therein) and US 6,110,848 of Bouchette do not disclose how the maximum tensile strength is determined, making these references largely irrelevant to amended claim 18. Anderson does disclose a calender roll with different bonding regions, but does not described how the prebonding is related to the tensile strength. According to the invention as now defined in the claims this strength is controlled by adjusting the temperature or pressure of the prebonding calender rolls. There is nothing in these references to support the supposition of the examiner that strength is a direct function of the bonding surface area.

More particularly, Anderson relates to the manufacture of a wash cloth with a spunbond and a fibrous layer secured thereto. The fibrous layer can for example be of cellulose fibers. The two layers of the washcloth according to are subject to a hydraulic needling and joined together in this manner. A prebonded spunbond

can be used as the starting material. Thus Anderson would not suggest to the person skilled in the art the combination of steps defined in amended claim 18, that is determining the maximum tensile strength and then prebonding to achieve something between 50% and 100% of this strength, using the method DIN 53815 to determine these characteristics. The product of Anderson would have nothing resembling the durability and flexibility of the product according to the invention. Anderson only describes a certain type of bonding surface in calender rolls for prebonding. Changing the pressure or temperature to produce a given product is not disclosed or suggested. Thus Anderson merely describes the admitted prior art, not the improvement of this invention that determines maximum strength and sets the calender rolls to achieve a certain portion of this strength.

Evans describes a method for making a fleece that has a fabric-like appearance. The finished product here is a laminate comprised of a spunbond layer and a layer of hydrophilic fibers. It is possible that the spunbond layer can be pretreated by needling with a surfactant. Aside from the details about the hydraulic needling, Evans does not go much further than Anderson, so that this reference adds nothing to the teachings of Anderson.

US 6,177,370 of Skoog relates to a method of making a multilayer laminate having a core layer of hydrophilic fibers to whose opposite faces prebonded spunbond layers are secured. The disclosure regarding the prebonding does not go beyond Anderson or

Evans, so that this reference adds nothing to the teachings of these two to anticipate amended claim 18.

In Bouchette a laminate is described where a layer of hydrophilic cellulose fibers is provided between two layers of synthetic fibers. Thus this reference also does not detail the critical prebonding procedure of this invention, with adjustment of pressure or temperature to achieve a defined strength, and therefore it also adds nothing to a rejection based on the above-discussed references.

For these reasons the rejections under §112, 102, and 103 are overcome. Allowance of all claims and passage to issue are in order.

K.F. Ross P.C.

/Andrew Wilford/

by: Andrew Wilford, 26,597
Attorney for Applicant

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5683 Riverdale Avenue Box 900
Bronx, NY 10471-0900
Cust. No.: 535
Tel: 718 884-6600
Fax: 718 601-1099
Email: email@kfrpc.com

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